A Divided Debate

Women's changing roles and the debate over equal rights

USH.C.7.2.E "Compare the changing roles of women including the goals of the Women's Liberation Movement and the National Organization of Women, comparing the views of Betty Friedan and Phyllis Schlafly."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two goals of the Women's Liberation Movement, circle two goals or actions of NOW, and mark Friedan's and Schlafly's opposing views of the ERA with 1 and 2.

What Would Equal Rights Change?

1 In the 1950s, many Americans expected married women to care for children and keep house, while men earned wages. Yet women also worked for pay, often in jobs with lower wages and fewer chances to advance. During the 1960s and 1970s, more women challenged limits on their choices at home, in schools, and at work. The Women's Liberation Movement was not one organization. Activists pushed for equal opportunities, control over reproductive decisions, and a greater share of household work.

2 In 1966, activists founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) to press for equal participation in American life. NOW challenged sex discrimination in hiring and education and supported the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a proposed constitutional guarantee of equal legal rights regardless of sex. Writer Betty Friedan, NOW's first president, argued that women should have opportunities beyond the role of homemaker. Her 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*, criticized the idea that domestic life alone should satisfy every woman.

3 Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative organizer, opposed the ERA. She argued that it could remove legal protections she believed benefited women, including exemptions from military conscription. She valued homemaking and warned that the amendment could weaken traditional family arrangements. Friedan and Schlafly both addressed women's lives, but they disagreed about whether equal-rights laws expanded women's choices or endangered valued differences. Congress approved the ERA in 1972, but it did not receive enough state ratifications by its 1982 deadline.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the movement's goals challenge common expectations for married women in the 1950s?

2. How was NOW different from the wider Women's Liberation Movement?

3. How did Friedan and Schlafly differ in their views of homemaking?

4. Why might Friedan and Schlafly have disagreed about the ERA?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label explaining why two women at a 1970s ERA debate might both say they supported women but disagree about the amendment. Include one concern on each side and explain how NOW fit into the wider movement.

A Divided Debate

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two goals of the Women's Liberation Movement, circle two goals or actions of NOW, and mark Friedan's and Schlafly's opposing views of the ERA with 1 and 2. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the movement's goals challenge common expectations for married women in the 1950s?	**Many people expected married women to focus on home and children; movement activists sought broader opportunities and a greater sharing of household work.**
2	How was NOW different from the wider Women's Liberation Movement?	**NOW was a specific organization that challenged discrimination and supported the ERA. The wider movement included activists pursuing several goals and was not one organization.**
3	How did Friedan and Schlafly differ in their views of homemaking?	**Friedan argued that women needed opportunities beyond homemaking; Schlafly valued homemaking and wanted to preserve traditional family arrangements.**
4	Why might Friedan and Schlafly have disagreed about the ERA?	**Friedan favored opportunities beyond traditional roles and NOW supported equal legal rights. Schlafly feared the ERA would remove protections she valued, such as exemptions from military conscription.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a 1970s ERA debate, Betty Friedan could argue that equal rights would help women pursue opportunities beyond homemaking. Phyllis Schlafly could reply that the amendment might remove protections she valued, such as exemptions from military conscription. Both spoke about women's lives, but they disagreed about what legal change would mean for women. NOW supported the ERA as one organization within the wider Women's Liberation Movement.

Accept other passage-based comparisons that accurately distinguish the wider movement from NOW and Friedan's views from Schlafly's. The museum label should explain the disagreement, not suggest that either woman spoke for all women.